



FAQs

How to Become a Cat Foster Parent

Seattle Animal Shelter

2061 15th Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119-2798

Foster Care hotline (206) 615-0737 (recording about the foster program)

Foster Cat Email: sasfostercats@gmail.com or sasfostercats@googlegroups.com

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Thank you for considering opening your heart and home to one of our shelter's orphaned cats. Your generosity will provide young and old, injured and sick, abused and under socialized cats a chance to grow or heal before finding their forever homes. The Seattle Animal Shelter began its foster care program in January 1999. Since then, the program has saved thousands of animals (cats, cats and critters) that might otherwise have been euthanized. The Foster Cat Program plays an integral part in the shelter's ability to adopt out as many as 3,000 orphans annually.

Reasons to foster

Fostering is a wonderful experience for you and your family - you can feel good knowing you have helped save a cat's life. Even better, you've created space in the shelter to accommodate other homeless cats. Foster cats provide companionship and purpose - your act of kindness is repaid in rewards that are beyond words.

Cats needing foster homes

- Kittens too young and/or immature to be adopted.
- Kittens and young cats that require more socialization than available at the shelter.
- Older or senior cats that will be more comfortable in a home environment.
- Injured cats and/or those recovering from surgery.
- Neglected or abused cats that need tender loving care.
- Cats suffering from "shelter stress" in need of a calming home environment.
- Cats with colds or with special medical needs.
- Abandoned mothers with litters of kittens.
- Any cat when the shelter becomes overcrowded.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1) How long do foster cases last? How much time does fostering take on a daily basis?

It completely depends on the cat and the situation. The average stay in a foster home is about 2 months. However, most kittens and some cats with great photos and stories on the web may stay only a few weeks. Others, recovering from an injury, senior cats, may stay much longer.

Daily Hours (estimate)	
Cats with a cold	2-3 hours
Anxiety in a cattery	2-3 hours
Weaned kittens	3-6 hours
Injured cats	2-3 hours
Baby bottle kittens	8 hours
Behavior cases	2-4 hours
Mom with kittens	3 hours
Cruelty victim	3 hours

- 2) What supplies are needed to foster? How much will it cost?

Foster parents provide space, food and love for the cat. The shelter will provide you with all the other supplies, meds and equipment needed throughout your foster experience.

- 3) Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or expertise?

No, but you may be asked to dispense medicine to your foster cat so you will have to be comfortable following veterinarian's instructions if fostering a sick or injured cat.

4) What if my foster cat becomes sick?

All veterinary costs are paid by the shelter through the generous donations to the Help the Animals Fund. If a foster cat becomes sick, foster parents must call the vet hotline to request an authorization for a vet visit. There is a selected list of veterinarian clinics which will bill the shelter directly.

5) If I have my own animals, can I foster cats?

Yes, but keep in mind that it's always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals. The health risk is minimal if your animals are current on their vaccinations, maintains a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young. If you or someone in your household is immune-compromised, consult your doctor before fostering since working or living with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called zoonoses. A zoonotic disease (there are about 200) is defined as a disease transmitted from animals to humans and also from humans to animals. To find out more about zoonoses, talk to your doctor and/or veterinarian. Proper hygiene, preventative measures and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease.

6) What if I have children?

Fostering is a wonderful family experience and can build a foundation of philanthropy in your children. It's important to select a cat that is "age" appropriate with your children. You must also be diligent about providing guidance, instructions and rules to your children about caring for an orphaned cat.

7) Can I adopt my foster cat?

YES! As long as foster parents meet the shelter requirements necessary for adoption, foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster cat.

8) How are foster cats promoted?

Photos and stories of all adoptable cats in foster homes are posted on Petfinder.com and at the shelter where the public can view them.

Foster cats are also promoted at monthly events throughout the city.

Foster parents can also help promote their foster cat to their family, friends, colleagues and the general public through a variety of means including flyers, emails and social networking sites.

9) How can I help my foster cat become more adoptable?

There are two ways to make a foster cat more adoptable.

First and foremost is marketing. If no one knows about your foster cat, or how wonderful it is, then it will be next to impossible to find them a forever home.

In addition to supplying great photos and a bio and updating these regularly, giving a foster cat additional exposure by telling friends and family about them will help create a “network effect” and will speed up the process of finding a forever home.

10) Can I return my foster cat to the shelter if I am unable to foster any longer?

We prefer that foster parents continue to foster until we find a permanent home for their foster cat. It's extremely stressful for a cat to be returned to the shelter environment. However, we understand that situations change and it may become necessary to discontinue fostering a cat. We request that a foster parent provides as much notice as possible (minimum 1-2 weeks) so that we can find an alternative foster home to transfer the cat to. Of course, in an emergency a foster parent may always bring their cat back to the shelter.

11) What if I go on vacation or have a business trip?

If given enough notice, we can usually find volunteers that can foster sit for short durations. We ask that foster parents always keep their case managers aware of any temporary foster sitting situations.

12) Are foster cats ever euthanized?

Much energy, love, time and vet care is devoted to our foster cats, and the shelter is committed to finding homes for ALL the adoptable cats within its care. Some cats are in foster care because they're seriously ill or injured. If, after medical attention, these cats are too young or too weak to heal and are suffering, then the shelter staff will humanely euthanize these animals. Fortunately, most cats in foster care heal beautifully. Your safety is our #1 priority. You must always inform the shelter staff and your case manager if your foster cat exhibits any aggressive behavior.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL FOSTER PARENTS

In order to become a foster parent, you will need to complete the following:

- Attend the Foster Cat Orientation and Foster Cat Training session. It is on the First Saturday of the month from 12 Noon to 1:30 PM in the shelter's conference room. This orientation is required for all current SAS volunteers.
- Complete, sign and return the Foster Care Application and Cat Foster Parent Agreement
- Seattle Animal Shelter staff may also remove a foster cat from a foster home for any reason they deem necessary.

IMPORTANT RULES AND REMINDERS

- Always wear your foster parent badge at all times when picking up a case.
- Always report a new case to the Cat Foster Team and your Case Manager(s).
- Foster cats must be kept indoors at all times.
- All vet visits must be pre-approved by calling the vet hotline. Even if you speak to shelter staff and they agree to a vet visit, you must call the vet hotline for approval.
- You must visit a vet listed on the preapproved list located in the foster cat packet.
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours to communications from shelter staff, Foster Cat Team members, or potential adopters.